

# Westport Neighborhood Association

August 17, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing on behalf of the Westport Neighborhood Association to urge your support for the City of Baltimore's TIGER II grant application for the Westport Waterfront Transit-Oriented Development (Westport Waterfront TOD).

Westport Neighborhood Association, Inc. (WNA), is a nonprofit organization formed by neighborhood volunteers to promote a safer, cleaner, and brighter future for the community of Westport. Right now, we are a neighborhood in need. Since the factories closed on the waterfront, many residents remain unemployed; many families are living in poverty, a lot of them seniors, raising their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Westport's 'Main Street,' Annapolis Road, used to be lined with small businesses providing products and services and jobs to the neighbors. Now it is lined with empty buildings. Ours was a neighborhood on what seemed like a nonstop decline until the Westport Waterfront Development purchased the abandoned factories lining the waterfront. With the coming Westport Waterfront TOD, those of us who have lived in Westport for generations finally see an opportunity to stop the decline, turn it around and improve our lives.

The Westport Waterfront TOD will bring thousands of new jobs to a neighborhood in desperate need of work. It will bring back small businesses to Annapolis Road, giving our neighborhood a Main Street again, a place to shop and eat and socialize. The improvements to the pedestrian bridge and walkways will make our lives safer – especially for our children, from 3 year-olds in Pre-K to 14 year-olds in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, who cross Annapolis Road and the pedestrian bridge over MD 295 every day to attend school. New parks and recreation areas and access to the waterfront will open up positive opportunities for our youth and get them off the street corners.

The Westport Waterfront TOD has already brought us positive change through its Westport Community Partnerships initiative, bringing in programs like Parks & People's clean and green team, hired from the neighborhood, job skills training through Civic Works, and more. The façade grant program has helped about 30 neighbors improve their homes. Help with grant writing has led to a neighborhood streetscape design plan, as well as youth programs, like baseball, football, rowing, and more. Trash has been cleaned up, over 200 trees have been planted, Indiana Street Park and Playground has been rehabbed, and the local school children had the opportunity to help plant the new wetlands.

We believe the Westport Waterfront TOD is necessary to the existing neighborhood's survival and future; it will revitalize the neighborhood of Westport and we want to be a part of it. Please award the City of Baltimore a TIGER II grant for the Westport Waterfront TOD and invest in our future. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Michael Eanes, President  
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cc: Mr. Jamie Kendrick, Baltimore City Department of Transportation